

Interviewer: Howard Powell.

This tape was presented to the Uintah County Library Regional History Center by Geraldine Powell.

Howard Powell (HP): Dad, I think that pretty well covers a lot of the highlights of your life. There are some things we could just kind of pick up at random. I recall you telling us about things earlier that might be interesting. You mentioned earlier that one of your recollections was when you were a small boy, that you used to gather bottles around Bottle Hollow where the resort and the lake are. Do you have some thoughts on that, or can you recall some of it?

Dean Powell (Dean): Yes, that was the time that we lived there just off of the Fort Duchesne where the soldiers were at. We didn't, of course, live on the fort, we lived out to the side, which was a place that was called Moffat at that time. I remember as a small boy going up to the saloon. A man by the name of Tom Nickell ran the saloon at that time and he would pay two cents for a bottle.

HP: That was quite a bit of money in those days wasn't it?

Dean: Oh yes, that was a lot of money, inasmuch as we didn't have any money at all. So he told me he would pay two cents for all the bottles I could bring him.

HP: These were whiskey bottles, were they?

Dean: There were whiskey bottles and wine bottles. As I remember, there were so many different kinds of bottles. There were fancy bottles, there were bottles with a lot of cut sides in them. They were quite pretty. Some of them were real large bottles and some of them were small bottles, flasks, what they call flasks. I remember getting one of these burlap sacks, we called them gunnicks then, and I'd go down this place where these bottles were thrown by the soldiers.

The soldiers could not have liquor in the fort, and so when they'd get time off, they'd go up to this place they called Moffat and they'd go to the saloon and they'd get this liquor and drink it and as they went on their trail down to the fort, which went down to what was called Bottle Hollow, it was just a big swale that was in there, that the trail went down through and they'd be sure they drank all this liquor before they got down to Fort Duchesne, because if they were caught with liquor there, then they would be court-martialed.

So there were plenty of bottles and this seemed to be... I can't recollect, but it seemed a couple of miles to me that I had to drag these bottles. Two miles, two miles and a half, something like that, but I'd fill this sack as full as I could drag it. I couldn't carry it then, I'd drag it. I'd just drag it a little ways at a time after I got what bottles I could pull. Then I'd rest, and I'd do this till I got up to the saloon. I'd go to his back door and I'd look in, and when he'd see me looking in the back door, why he'd come out and count my bottles and pay me. I did this day after day, and I accumulated quite a lot of pennies, which I thought was quite a lot of money at that time. Of course, I could buy candy and other things with it there at the store and this was one of the things

that was very important to us in our lives at that time.

Now, where the Bottle Hollow resort is, a lot of people think it's called Bottle Hollow, but that isn't really Bottle Hollow. Bottle Hollow is over two or three miles east of there and goes down from the place that's called Gusher at this time.

HP: They used to call it The Strip.

Dean: They used to call it The Strip. That was the time they had the saloons there and the stores, and the soldiers used to go over there, that was The Strip. The Bottle Hollow is from that place that's called Gusher now. The path ran kitty-cornered from The Strip to the east side of the fort. There were a lot of bottles there, but they have been gathered up by people seeking souvenirs, and they have been hauled off by the truckload. I haven't been there for years, but I doubt whether you could even find a bottle down in there now or not, and that's about all there is to that experience.

HP: You told us one time about your first experience when you went into the bar.

Dean: Oh, yes, my Uncle Mart Marsing, another one of my other uncles that lived there by the fort where my mother, at this time, was washing for the officers of Fort Duchesne. This uncle Mart was not the one that went to Idaho with my father. His name was Hans Marsing. They both married my father's sisters.

One day my Uncle Mart saw me at the back door of the saloon. He said, "Hey let him in." So the bartender, Mr. Nickell, let me in. I went up to him and I remember there was quite a lot of loud talk in there that day and there was a lot of girls and people having a big loud time. He set me up on the corner of the bar and he said to the bartender, "Get him a drink." I thought I was one of the group. My eyes, I guess, got quite large. The bartender got me out a bottle and I proceeded to drink out of it. Of course, at the time, I'd never tasted anything quite like that, but then later on I found out it was sarsaparilla. Of course, that was one of the main soft drinks of that day. But at the time he put me up on the bar, I thought I was having regular old hard liquor along with the rest of the group.

HP: Do you still remember when you came into the Fort Duchesne area? When you moved, you came by wagon through Nine-mile by buggy or?

Dean: I came from Desert Lake up to Price and then down to Wellington, then through Nine-mile and into Myton. That was the only road into the Uinta Basin at that time from that part of the country, in fact, from any part of the country, was through Nine-mile into Duchesne. There was a stopping place, as I remember, that called the Wells. It took us several days to go from Desert Lake to Fort Duchesne. Oh, we must have been a week or better camping on those trips. I remember riding with one of the wagons which my Uncle Jess Hadden drove and I'd say, "How far is it before we get to where we can camp?" And he'd say, "Just over the next ridge." Then when we'd get over the next ridge, I'd say, "Well, now we're over that ridge, how much further?" And he would say, "Well, just over the next one." That went on till about dark before we would make camp.

HP: That's very interesting. It is kind of hard to realize, this day and age, how long it took to go anywhere and do anything as it did.

Then also you were a young man during the Depression years, in the 1930s. During the stock market crash and the terrible Depression. Did that have any effect on your life, or do you remember the circumstances that existed then in this area?

Dean: Yes, I can remember quite a lot of circumstances that existed in this area at that time, however, it didn't affect me as bad as it did others. I knew it was affecting a lot of other people, because this was the period of time that I had all these mail contracts, and I had money. We had money and hardly anyone else had any money. In fact, it was said at that time that I had all the money there was in the Indian Reservation. A dollar was very hard to come by at that time.

This was a time when the banks went broke also. The Bank of Duchesne went broke, the Myton State Bank went broke, the Roosevelt Bank went bankrupt, all the banks around, the banks in Vernal and other places. I don't remember the particular banks in Vernal, but I know there were some that went bankrupt.

I remember the money in the Bank of Duchesne, and as I was on the contract of my mail run up at Bonita I heard some men talking and they said, "When the bank closes in Duchesne today its not going to open again." I heard that. I don't know where they got their information or anything, but I made haste at that particular time. I had a good car, but the road was very rough. It was a dirt road, and I made a record run because I knew that's where I had my money, and knew that if I lost that, that I'd be in the same boat that all the rest the people around there were in. I just pulled right up in front of the bank, I remember, and I just jumped out—left the door open on the car and bounced into the bank just before twelve o'clock. I took out my checkbook, wrote out the balance I had in the bank and there happened to be a girl that was in there. I wasn't married at the time. I wrote out a check and I said, "I want this money." And she looked at me, she said, "I don't know if I can come up with that much or not." I said, "Well, you'll have to. I don't want no script, don't want anything." But she did she pay me and I walked out of there. They closed the doors behind me and they were never opened again.

HP: You said this was before you were married. Was this in the thirties or before the big Depression of the thirties that these banks went broke?

Dean: This was before the thirties, yes.

HP: During the thirties, during the Depression, you had some cattle, didn't you? Didn't they, the government, buy the cattle because there was no market for them or anything and pay \$25 or \$30 a head for them and you had to cut their ears off?

Dean: Well you got the price boosted up on all the cattle because at that particular time there was a big drought on, real severe drought. It hadn't rained or stormed in the wintertime or rained in the summer for two years and there was no feed on the ranges.

I had quite a herd of cattle and the government put out a program whereby that it would pay. I can't remember just the exact price, but it was somewhere's around about \$10 for a pair of ears and this could be a calf or cow or a large critter. It didn't make any difference. If you could

produce the ears, the government would pay you \$10 for each pair of ears. So I brought quite a large herd of cattle in and I remember trailing the first bunch, it was what was known as the Shank's Ranch, and there was a large corral there. The corral was full and they came and killed all of these cattle and I took the ears.

HP: They just buried them didn't they?

Dean: They hauled them off from that place. Some places they didn't, but they hauled them off from there. Now, I don't know what they really did with the carcasses, because I remember there at the corral there were people from the mines, over around Castle Gate and Helper. There was just truck after truck standing there. I think they were going to follow these cattle that the government had bought and take the carcasses and I think they were going to probably try to save some of them because there were just lots of these Greeks and people that worked in the mines that were hungry.

HP: Desperate times, wasn't it?

Dean: After that, that was in the thirties, they had another drought, when the government did the same thing. Only at this time I took the cattle into the upper ranch up at Hanna and we slaughtered right there. We didn't load them in trucks. I had a man shoot them and I had a man cut the ears off and at that time there was also a lot of people there that wanted meat and stuff and they just took the hides and the carcasses and whatever they wanted of it. Then a big trench was dug up and the rest of it, and they scraped this into a big pit and covered it over with dirt.

HP: Can you think of anything else that you might like to add? That covers a long period of time. Are there any other highlights that you can think of?

Dean: Well, there probably are some other highlights but at the present time, I don't recall any. I don't recall anymore at this time.

HP: Well, that's very interesting, Dad. I can remember a lot of these things when I was a small child, the things that you've mentioned and told us about.

Dean: During this time that I mentioned, I was chief of the Fire Department, I was also a Red Cross First Aid instructor for Duchesne County. I had many experiences in that field. This was when they started having these first aid stations, Red Cross First Aid Stations. They called them Highway First Aid Stations and this was the time that there began to be quite a lot of traffic. There were lots of accidents.

I had many experiences. We had a first aid station I had in connection with the fire department and I had many experiences with people in accidents. Also, during that particular time, we didn't have a doctor in Duchesne and the people more or less depended on me for help whenever they had sickness or accidents. Inasmuch as I had quite a considerable experience in first aid they would call on me.

There was one time in Duchesne when I'd been in practically every home in Duchesne City to help them out with their sickness in one form or another.

HP: Well that's very interesting. I can't recall anything else to ask at this time. So at least for the present this will conclude this tape on this Sunday, September 20, 1981, at the Dean Powell residence of Duchesne, Utah.